

INTRODUCTION

Petersburg National Battlefield was authorized by Congress as a unit of the National Park Service with the enabling legislation of July 3, 1926. The Park's purpose was stated as follows:

“In order to commemorate the campaign and siege and defense of Petersburg, Virginia in 1864 and 1865 and to preserve for historical purposes the breastworks, earthworks, walls, or other defenses or shelters used by the armies therein, the battlefields at Petersburg, in the State of Virginia, are declared a national battlefield....”

Petersburg National Battlefield preserves some of the most important physical remains and locations of the Siege of Petersburg, one of the most decisive military campaigns of the Civil War. This campaign took place in a semicircle around the City of Petersburg in an area of approximately 170 square miles. Here the soldiers of General Ulysses S. Grant's Union Command and Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia engaged in the final climactic battles of the Civil War in the decisive Virginia theater. Although Lee conducted a masterful defensive operation for nine and one half months, Grant's campaign of attrition forced the Confederate commander to evacuate Petersburg and retreat westward. The extensive earthworks and battle scarred landscape were left as a reminder of their ordeal.



Colquitt Salient, Confederate

NPS Photo

Map of Petersburg National Battlefield